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Before starting, the Djukas take a sniff of tobacco. They 276
prefer snuffing it to smoking. They suck up their wide brown nostrils a dark liquid made from tobacco leaf soaked in water, to which a little wood-ash has been added. Each man carries a small supply, in a calabash gourd or tiny tin can. Before taking a sniff they put their fingers in the gourd and knead the leaf to get out all the juice. Then a little is poured out in the palm of the hand and snuffed up. They make a wry face at it, shaking their heads violently and spitting.

They pass it to the bahkra with a sly smile.

"Wannee?"

"No, no, no. *Me dissee no lubee; gran danke!*" which means, "I don't like this; many thanks!"

Late in the afternoon we come upon the camp of some 314 ●
balata bleeders. It is deserted. There is an unforgettable sour stench from the last fermenting sap. For a while it is sickening and overwhelms every other odour. The balata bleeders are usually British Guiana Negroes, or Djukas trained by them, who go through the jungle tapping the sap from wild rubber trees. They produce sheets of a crude rubber, known as balata, which are traded in the white settlements of Demerara or Paramaribo. The chief industries of the bush country are balata bleeding, lumbering, and washing for gold. [313 316]
All of them are carried on exclusively by Negroes.

A few sheets of balata, about a half-inch thick, are hanging from poles. The Djukas assert that the shotguns of the white man cannot shoot through the stiff rubber. We stand off about fifty feet and bang away. Strangely enough, the

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314 shot enters the rubber but does not pierce it through. Little dents indicate where the shot is buried inside. With a pistol, however, the result is different. A bullet from a .38 calibre revolver goes clean through. After we have fired, a Negro detaches himself from the group and disappears in the bush. In twenty minutes he is back, bringing the bullet from the revolver. He had traced its course by broken twigs and [151] clipped branches, and finally dug it out of the side of a tree with his bush-knife—on the whole an extraordinary bit of woodcraft.

484 It is disgusting to find that we have to sleep overnight in this camp. The white man is thoroughly exhausted, able only to drop down on a log while the Negroes make camp. The bahkra's hammock is slung and a fire started. Monkey meat is the *pièce de résistance* of the evening meal.

[252 The monkey is not skinned; only the hair is scraped off.
262] Monkey skin is a jungle delicacy, but there is a humanly cadaverous look to the depilated body. Half of the meat is cut up and dumped into the stew pot together with rice and salt.
[251] The other half is smoked liberally to preserve it for the morrow.

Not in the mood to take food which his stomach might reject, the bahkra dines on a can of salmon, with rice and tea on the side. The sun has hardly set when he falls gratefully into the hammock and ties the mosquito netting in place, ready for profound slumber.

521 He soon finds that sleep is out of the question. The Bush Negroes are sitting about the campfire swapping tales of